

2009-2012

Study of Ministry Commission Report & Recommendations



Report to the Board of Directors
General Board of Higher Education
& Ministry ♦ August 2011

Email comments to:
ministrystudy@gbhem.org

Charge to the 2009-2012 Study of Ministry Commission

The 2008 General Conference charged the 2009-2012 Study of Ministry Commission to “report to the 2012 General Conference with legislation addressing the issues before the commission including the ordering of ministry, the separation of ordination and conference membership, and the streamlining of the process leading toward ordained ministry” (calendar item 183).

We offer this report with hope and confidence, and as a record of our discernment of how to revise our leadership structures in order to equip The United Methodist Church in its mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

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Report of the 2009-2012 Study of Ministry Commission

Why Another Study of Ministry Commission?

We offer the results of our work together and our listening across a global church to the General Conference for action. We begin with a question that sometimes surfaces: Why should we study the ministry (again)? And why should there be a Study of Ministry Commission?

Our first response is contextual: If our leadership is to be effective, it must be expressed in diverse missional contexts across the world; we must listen to what the Spirit is saying to our churches! If our leadership is to bear fruit, it must take into account the challenges that confront the church and society, among them poverty, disease, and disparities in opportunities. To be relevant, our leadership must take into account patterns of change in daily life (technology, for example) and across the planet (globalization).

Beyond context, our theology is always shaped by our call to mission and Christian experience. Wesley's doctrines of grace and holiness were expressions of his own practical theology in eighteenth century England. While our doctrinal standards are received tradition, our theological task is ongoing. Thomas Langford used this analogy: "Doctrine is the part of cathedral that is already completed, exploratory theology is creative architectural vision and preliminary drawings for possible new construction" (*Doctrine and Theology in the United Methodist Church*, p.204).

Why should we study ordained ministry? If we do not study the ministry, our construction of systems and processes related to ordained ministry will resemble a building project that occurs without benefit of an architect or reflective consultation. Many believe that reflective planning about ordained ministry cannot occur within the constraints of the General Conference: the time is too brief, the environment is too politicized, the amount of material is too substantive, and the number of voices who need to be heard is too many in that restricted time and format.

The alternative, and indeed the mandate of the General Conference, is a study of ministry during the interim between these quadrennial gatherings. The Church attempts to gather a representative group with experience and expertise for the task. And, of course, the work of the commission flows through the appropriate church bodies (Boards of Ordained Ministry, Cabinets and Bishops, persons called to ordained ministry, and congregational leaders) en route to the legislative process of the General Conference. The 2008 General Conference charged this commission to "report to the 2012 General Conference with legislation addressing the issues before the commission including the ordering of ministry, the separation of ordination and conference membership, and the streamlining of the process leading toward ordained ministry" (calendar item 183).

We offer this report with hope and confidence, and as a record of our discernment of how to revise our leadership structures in order to equip The United Methodist Church in its mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Our Core Values as a Commission

The Study of Ministry Commission affirms our Wesleyan heritage as the starting point for our study and recommendations. Theologically, the commission's work is grounded in the historic Wesleyan tradition, yet mindful of the profound changes shaping our churches, communities, society, and the world. The document *A Wesleyan Vision for Theological Education and Leadership Formation for the 21st Century* and reports of previous Study of Ministry Commissions were valuable resources. We particularly build on the theological and ecclesial foundation articulated in the document *Minutes of Several Conversations* presented as the commission report to the 2008 General Conference.

Outdated church systems do not respond to today's multi-religious and multi-ethnic culture. The nature and face of ordained leadership must change, as we live in vastly changed societal contexts from those of the 1960-1970's when most current church structures were created.

Even as we remain faithful to United Methodist biblical and theological heritage, we must respond to changes in society and the world. We intend that our theological groundings reflect a transformative element that retains core Christian truths, and makes them relevant to current and future generations. The commission proposals are intended to revise processes that identify, credential, and deploy leaders for the church in order to make those processes more streamlined, responsive to changing contexts, and flexible. These processes are expressions of theological commitments and must remain faithful to Wesleyan theological heritage.

The Theological Foundations for the Commission's Work

Called by God:

- All ministry is grounded in baptism: All baptized believers are gifted and called for some form of ministry in the name of Christ.
- Ordained ministry is a gift of the Holy Spirit for Christ's holy church.
- The fullness of God's call to ordained ministry is the resonance of the inner call (in the individual) and the outer call (as expressed & authorized by the church).
- The historic offices of Deacon and Elder lead the community in bringing all its ministries to focus.
- Bishops are called forth from the Order of Elders specifically for leadership in oversight of conferences and the general superintendency of the church.
- Local pastors further the mission of the connection by extending the gospel to areas and people who might not otherwise be afforded the opportunity for a church or a pastor. They incorporate the meaning of Wesley's "extra-ordinary circumstances."
- Through the offices of Deacon, Elder, Bishop, and Local Pastor the church has the necessary leadership to meet the challenges of a new age.

Formation by Grace in Community:

- Prevenient grace is the grounding for a lifelong spiritual and formational journey in the body of Christ.
- Justifying grace is a reminder to us that salvation is a gift to be claimed and shared with others.

- Sanctifying grace is the continual shaping and pruning in community through accountability, lifelong learning, and spiritual growth.
- Those called to a set-apart ministry move through the stages of candidacy, commissioning (provisional membership), and ordination (full membership). Together, the church and the candidate seek to discern the presence of John Wesley's three dimensions of the call: Grace, Gifts, and Fruit.

Sent Into the World:

- The mission of The United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Through baptism all are called to participate in that mission through the vocation of service. Some are set-apart for ordained servant leadership.
- Jesus did not wait for the disciples to come to him, but actively sought them out for service. One of the tasks of the church is to identify, call and authorize ordained leaders.
- The purpose of set-apart ministry is to lead the church in its ministry for and with the world. The early Methodists experienced the grace of God in the world through works of mercy and justice. Class leaders gathered in communities and preachers were sent into an itinerant ministry. God continues to call people into service, which takes a variety of forms.

A covenantal prayer was formulated by the commission at our first gathering. This prayer guided our work throughout and also reflects our core values.

Listening to Others

Throughout the quadrennium the commission has listened to a variety of constituencies. We have heard about the aging of clergy and the need to recruit young adults as new leaders. We have heard from cabinets and bishops that in some conferences too few full-time appointments are available for elders. We have heard from those entering ministry that candidacy processes are unwieldy, inconsistent, and inhospitable, if not sometimes impossible. We have heard from bishops and general agencies that we must find new leaders for The United Methodist Church who can recognize where God is moving and join in the transformation of the world.

The 2008 General Conference recognized that trying to revise our processes for identifying, credentialing, and deploying leadership for the church in the 21st Century piecemeal is not wise. In continuing with our earlier architectural metaphor, the last Study of Ministry Commission created and presented preliminary plans at the 2008 General Conference. The 2009-2012 Study of Ministry Commission was then directed to address the issues of the ordering of ministry, earlier ordination, and streamlining the process toward ordination.

Even with changes occurring within the last two quadrennia, most notably to the candidacy period, the process that leads to licensed and ordained ministry is perceived as being too lengthy and cumbersome. One of the directives for the 2009-2012 Study of Ministry Commission was to streamline the process leading toward ordained ministry. To respond to this perception, it is important to note recent changes that have already shortened the candidacy process.

United Methodist membership requirements for candidacy have been relaxed and expanded:

- Entry is allowed into the candidacy process through a United Methodist campus ministry or other UM-related ministry setting outside the local church (§311.1 a) 2008 Book of Discipline).
- College students active in a UM campus ministry may join the UMC on the general roll through GBHEM. This provides a quicker way to church membership for college students who are only affiliated with a UM campus ministry. (§ 223, 2008 Book of Discipline)

Three years have been eliminated from the minimum time-line requirements from entering candidacy to ordination:

- The minimum UM church membership requirement was decreased from two to one year (§311.1 a) 2008 Book of Discipline).
- The minimum time required for certified candidacy was reduced from two to one year (§324.1 2008 Book of Discipline).
- Candidates are eligible to be commissioned to provisional membership after completing one-half of their educational requirements including the basic graduate theological studies; typically after about two years of seminary rather than after completing their entire education (§324.4, 2008 Book of Discipline).
- The minimum provisional membership requirement has been reduced from three to two years of serving in a full-time appointment following the completion of educational requirements (§330.1 and §335(1), 2008 Book of Discipline).

Requirements prescribing which candidacy materials to use have been eliminated which allows annual conferences to decide what resources are the most relevant for their circumstances:

- Reading *The Christian as Minister* and *Ministry Inquiry Process* is no longer required but instead recommended (§311, 2008 Book of Discipline).
- The former requirement to study the *Candidacy Guidelines* has been changed to read: "Mentor and candidate will study the resources adopted by the conference Board of Ordained Ministry" (§311.1c), 2008 Book of Discipline).
- "In special circumstances, the district Committee on Ordained Ministry may authorize other UM ministry settings to serve in the role of the local church for the purpose of recommending candidacy and specify the persons or bodies that will serve in the roles of pastor, pastor parish relations committee and charge conference" (§311.3, 2008 Book of Discipline).
- "The district Committee on Ordained Ministry, through the conference Board of Ordained Ministry, shall seek ways to consider cultural and ethnic/racial realities in meeting these requirements" (§311.2.b.2, 2008 Book of Discipline).

In the assessment of ministry candidates, we again refer to the 2008 report. "Leadership is...*not* about meeting the needs of existing local churches; we want to build up the work of local churches only because they are the critical support system for something even more important: our service of God's mission in the world" (Q21.3). The United Methodist Church needs leaders for a variety of tasks in the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

The Study of Ministry within the Context of Other Church-Wide Studies

The commission is aware that a number of other authorized bodies are also focusing on the preparation and practice of ordained and set-apart leadership. Two are of particular importance: The Call to Action Committee and the Clergy Systems Task Force.

The Call to Action report stated that a common factor across 32,000 highly vital congregations was “effective pastoral leadership.” One of the key recommendations for the future of our denomination is to “dramatically reform the clergy leadership development, deployment, evaluation, and accountability systems.” This reform includes giving attention to pathways into ordained ministry, mentoring in support of faithful ministry, and gracious and humane processes for those who cannot continue in ordained ministry.

Three of the aspirations of Call to Action Committee members resonate with the core values of the Study of Ministry Commission:

- more grace and freedom and fewer rules
- more accountability to the Gospel and less conformity to an outdated, bureaucratic system
- more participation with young people and less rhetoric about our good intentions to include and engage younger people

While the Call to Action’s focus on local congregations differs from the Study of Ministry Commission’s larger analysis (including forms of service beyond the local church), there are important points of convergence.

Another significant study within the life of our Church is the Church Systems Task Force’s (CSTF) examination of ministry, with a particular focus on the health and self-care of clergy. The 2008 General Conference established the CSTF to examine itineracy and appointment-making systems and recommend improvements that support clergy health; examine and recommend improvements to supervisory systems; address processes for entering and exiting ordained and licensed ministry; and provide guidelines for sustaining a healthy work/life balance during ministry.

Based on their research, the CSTF has recommended that tenure in appointments become longer and that conferences make greater use of interim assignments in conflicted situations. The report also highlights the need for spiritual direction that can be given by someone other than the district superintendent and that mentoring be made available throughout the life of a clergyperson. Finally, the CSTF concurs with the Call to Action about the need to develop a process for graceful exit for clergy who cannot perform the duties of ministry.

Both of these reports make recommendations in areas of ministry related to itineracy and continued appointment, which are also concerns of the Study of Ministry Commission. The Call to Action identifies the “adaptive challenge” of The United Methodist Church in the following way: *“To redirect the flow of attention, energy, and resources to an intense concentration on fostering and sustaining an increase in the number of **vital congregations** effective in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”* The Church Systems Task Force focuses on the individual clergy person, and on his or her health and well-being. The Call to

Action is shaped by the concerns of evangelism and mission, the CSTF by a crisis in clergy health and the human and financial costs in our denomination.

The Study of Ministry is undertaken within a context defined by each of these realities – membership decline and clergy stress and illness— and yet its focus is different: developing a coherent understanding of set-apart ministry, and aligning this understanding with practices and processes appropriate to institutional, missional, and theological perspectives in a church that is Wesleyan in heritage and increasingly global in character. These studies resonate with each other and we trust that this is in fact a sign that the Spirit is speaking to the church in this crucial area.

Recommendations

Each recommendation developed from a guiding principle, followed by the challenge to be addressed, and a desired vision out of which the recommendation was formed.

1. Developing a Culture of Call

Principle: The future vitality of The United Methodist Church rests not only in making disciples, but also in cultivating leaders. We urge annual conferences to be more intentional about processes that will help persons in the transition from their baptismal identity into called leadership. These processes are not limited to training ordained leaders, but must include the creation of a culture of call where individuals are invited to hear and respond to a unique call from God. We must especially attend to helping faithful young adults see ordained leadership as a viable vocation.

Challenge: The percentage of young adult leaders in the U.S. church is alarmingly low. With the number of retirements predicted in the next 20 years, we will fall seriously short of current clergy needs unless this trend is reversed.¹ While second career clergy have many skills that benefit the church, a critical part of the body of Christ is missing from ordained leadership when young adults are such a small percentage of deacons and elders. Paul makes this statement clear to the church in Corinth when he likens the interdependency of all the parts of the corporal body to the members of the Body of Christ, the church. As United Methodists, we affirm Paul's teaching by recognizing the church's need to be intentionally inclusive of all people and to celebrate the interdependency among all parts of the body. When the Body of Christ does not include the full participation of young adults, it is incomplete. The gifts which the different members of the Body possess, Paul insists, are for the benefit of the whole and contribute to the flourishing of its mission.

Vision: Our vision is for a church that identifies and nurtures the most gifted, the most faithful and prophetic, the most effective and fruitful leaders for the 21st century. Renewing a culture of

¹The percentage of elders and deacons younger than 35 is too low to meet current and future needs for ordained leadership. The percentage of young elders increased to 5.47% in 2010, the highest in over a decade. Clergy aged 35-54 now represent 45% of elders, down from 65% in 1985. In 2010, for the first time, over half of active elders are age 55-72. Deacons show increasing age trends but still have only 9.56% under age 35 (*2010 Clergy Age Trends Report*, Lewis Center for Church Leadership).

call in The United Methodist Church will mean lifting up ordained ministry as a fulfilling vocation for faithful young adults seeking to serve God in their vocations. Each annual conference setting is unique and requires strategic recruitment of those who have the most needed leadership skills and gifts.

Recommendation: In order to invite people to consider ordained ministry, each annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry will give strategic leadership to the annual conference, districts, congregations, campus ministries, and camps (and other appropriate ministries) to renew a culture of call among youth and young adults.

Legislative Recommendation: ¶635, Study of Ministry Commission

2. A Conference Vocational Discernment Coordinator

Principle: Christian ministry is grounded in baptism, and all the baptized are gifted and called for ministry in Christ's name. God calls diverse people for distinct and varied forms of service as licensed and ordained leaders. Set-apart leadership emerges from the community of the baptized with the guidance of the Holy Spirit in order to advance the witness and service of the church in the world. In The United Methodist Church, authorization for licensed and ordained ministry is lodged in the local church *and* the annual conference.

God's call to leadership may be recognized and initiated by the individual or by the community. The individual's understanding of call includes hearing that call, discernment, response, and preparation for service. The community's response includes affirming, mentoring, assessment, approval, and authorization for service on behalf of The United Methodist Church. Like the 2005-2008 Study of Ministry Commission, "We believe the vocation of leadership is both individual and communal. That is, the *individual*, after much disciplined searching and prayer, knows an "inward call" from God; and that call is fully discerned and affirmed only in *community* with others—the "outward call" of the church. As the individual discerns the movement of the Spirit, the call is tested, confirmed, and modified by the community. This balance—the conversation of inward and outward call—is essential in the discernment of leadership."²

The individual's decision to explore licensed or ordained ministry is followed by candidacy which includes vocational discernment, mentoring, and preparation. Discernment and mentoring allows time and space for the Holy Spirit's guidance in reflection and decision-making. It is distinctive from the steps and requirements of preparation for ministry and from the evaluative and supervisory components of one's movement toward licensed or ordained ministry.

Challenge: The candidacy process is sometimes poorly implemented and strong candidates are lost to the church. Too often candidates are delayed at the point of assigning a candidacy mentor, receive a mentor who is not adequately trained, or are delayed in enrolling in the Online Candidacy Application System and become discouraged from pursuing candidacy.

Vision: Those entering candidacy will be assigned a mentor as quickly as possible and will have the opportunity to participate in a group setting with peers and effective mentors as they discern

² See the 2008 Commission report, Q.30.

God's call for their lives. Group mentoring will provide preliminary testing of a call and gifts through peer group reflection, learning, and feedback guided by one or more thoroughly trained mentors. Potential church leaders must learn to test their personal discernment in the body of Christ. Particularly gifted mentors may be used more effectively as they work with more candidates in a group setting.

Recommendation: We recommend that there be a conference-wide vocational discernment coordinator responsible for making the candidacy process inviting and accessible, strengthening the candidacy mentoring program, and giving guidance and training to candidacy mentors. This person will be a member of the annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry, will work closely with the cabinet and the Board's executive committee to assign mentors, and will attend training coordinated by the GBHEM. Additionally, we propose a shift from individual candidacy mentoring to mentoring in groups (whenever possible). Mentors must be thoroughly trained to implement the processes that lead to licensing and ordination, and gifted in facilitating groups.

Legislative Recommendations: ¶¶349, 635, Study of Ministry Commission

3. Orientation to Ministry

Principle: All baptized Christians are called to ministry. Within the body of Christ, some are set-apart for ministries of leadership while "No ministry is subservient to another" (¶130).

Challenge: "Without creative use of the diverse gifts of the entire body of Christ, the ministry of the church is less effective" (¶303.4). Diverse ministry contexts present a challenge as the church seeks leaders for these new contexts. Some of these leaders were trained in a variety of theological traditions, and there is no assurance that candidates have been acquainted with United Methodist ethos in relation to connectionalism.

Vision: We envision a collegial model of ministry with local pastors, deacons, and elders working together to lead the UMC in its mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. To form the collegium, we envision a common experience where candidates for set-apart ministry reflect on the ethos of The United Methodist Church.

Recommendations: All candidates for licensed or ordained ministry in an annual conference will attend an Orientation to Ministry together. This common experience will begin to build collegiality and understanding among the varieties of set-apart ministry. Following the Orientation to Ministry experience and certification as a candidate, those seeking ordination will come under the care of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry at least one year before they are ordained. If the candidate is serving an appointment, licenses will be granted until the successful completion of the requirements for ordination or until no appointment is available. Those pursuing ministry as a local pastor will remain under the care of the district Committee on Ordained Ministry.

Legislative Recommendations: NEW ¶¶312, ¶314, Study of Ministry Commission

4. Earlier Ordination, Provisional, and Full Membership

Principle: Ordination is a gift of God for the church and a public sign and act by which the church affirms God's gifts through the work of those called to ordained ministry. Ordination initiates a holy covenant between God, the church, and the candidate which is not lived as a right, but as a privilege and responsibility that hinges upon the continued honoring of the covenant. Although ordination cannot be merited and the clergy person lives into his/her ordination throughout the span of ministry, it marks the completion of a required level of preparation, including education and examination.

Ordained clergy agree to be sent on behalf of the mission of the Church to lead in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The Church enters into a covenant with the ordained for accountability to the mission. "The effectiveness of the church in mission depends on these covenant commitments to the ministry of all Christians and the ordained ministry of the Church" ¶303.4.

Challenge: The Call to Action report calls for dramatic reform to clergy leadership development, deployment, and accountability. Additionally, the 2009-2012 Study of Ministry Commission was directed to address the issues of the ordering of ministry, earlier ordination, and streamlining the process toward ordination. We agree with the 2008 Study of Ministry Commission Report that the practice of commissioning has not been substantive, well understood, or accepted by the church. While withholding ordination until provisional members have proven effective in ministry, we expect commissioned ministers to serve as if ordained. Commissioning has caused confusion not only among clergy and laity, but also among our ecumenical partners. Commissioning is theologically unsound in that it deploys provisional elders to function as ordained elders thus separating practice and theology. [The local church is the primary setting of Word and Table; and sacramental authority resides in the order of the elder. [Missional urgency for ministry in the world has extended sacramental authority to the local pastor and, since 2008, to ordained deacons in missional contexts under the authority of the bishop.] See page 14 below under *Sacramental Authority*.]

Vision: In keeping with the charge of the 2008 General Conference, the commission envisions that those seeking ordination will be eligible to be ordained following one year of service as a certified candidate and completion of all education and preparation requirements. At least one year before anticipated ordination certified candidates will declare their intent to pursue ordination. Upon approval of the district Committee on Ordained Ministry, they will come under the care of the Board of Ordained Ministry until a final decision is made about their ordination. Following ordination, a residency program of provisional membership led by the Board of Ordained Ministry will provide continued learning and growth in effectiveness. The elder or deacon in provisional connection will develop his/her ministerial identity and demonstrate signs of effectiveness in ministry. During this time, the elder or deacon is assigned a clergy mentor, participates in clergy covenant groups, is a member and participant in the life of the respective order, receives supervision from the district superintendent, and fulfills continuing education and formation requirements. Participation in the residency program during provisional membership is a condition for appointment and partially fulfills the requirements for full membership.

After a period of at least two years in residency and no more than eight years, the elder or deacon may be elected to full conference membership with its privileges and responsibilities. Elders or deacons in full connection are responsible for all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy, and are eligible to be elected as delegates to the general, jurisdictional or central conferences. Provisional membership may be discontinued at any time by the elder or deacon, or by the annual conference upon recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry, at which time he/she will surrender ordination and provisional membership credentials. The commission believes that this change will clarify the authorization of those appointed to lead as elders and deacons. With ordination, the church affirms the candidate's call, fitness for ministry, and promise of future usefulness that candidates bring to the Church. During the provisional membership period, deacons and elders will serve as ordained leaders while testing their readiness to become full members of the annual conference.

Recommendation: The Study of Ministry Commission recommends that certified candidates be ordained upon the satisfactory completion of all educational and other requirements, and recommends the elimination of commissioning.

Legislative Recommendations: ¶¶141, 306, 309, 311, 315, 324, 325, 326, 327, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, Study of Ministry Commission

5. Missional Appointment Making

Principle: The Church best realizes its mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world through fruitful congregations that are transforming both individuals and communities and are served by effective clergy undergirded by a system that is *itinerant, open, flexible, and responsive*. We are mindful that standards of effectiveness and fruitfulness must be measured by God's way of working in the world through an imperfect church and imperfect people. Appointments through the itinerant system should be determined by the missional needs of the communities to be served, giftedness and effectiveness of clergy, fruitfulness of congregations/ministry settings, and supply of clergy related to available appointments. In a *missional appointment* a clergyperson exhibits accountability, character, servant leadership, and effectiveness and the congregation/ministry setting advocates and monitors for the prophetic voice and inclusion of women and ethnic persons in pastoral leadership.

Challenge: Security of appointment, commonly called guaranteed appointment, has become a barrier to fulfilling the church's mission.

- Security of appointment limits the ability of the church to respond to the primacy of missional needs.
- Security of appointment sometimes emphasizes the clergyperson's needs instead of focusing on the church's mission.
- Security of appointment restricts flexibility of appointments.
- Security of appointment is not financially sustainable, as it does not allow for the unequal supply of clergy related to available appointments.

Vision: We envision fruitful congregations served by effective clergy that are transforming individuals and communities, undergirded by a system that is itinerant, open, flexible, and

responsive. Consistent with the Gospel mandate (Matthew 28) and our Wesleyan heritage, the witness of the church is enhanced through reclaiming an emphasis on *missional* appointments rather than security of appointments. Missional appointments are determined by missional needs of the community, effectiveness of clergy, fruitfulness of congregations/ministry settings, and faithfulness to open itineracy. They may be full-time or less than full-time. Missional appointments emphasize fruitfulness of congregations and effectiveness of clergy over security of employment. We acknowledge the difficulties associated with this vision such as uncertainty, loss of security, caring for those in employment transitions, concern about episcopal authority, and loss of historic protections. We feel strongly, however, that this vision is critical for the fulfillment of the church's mission.

Recommendations: In order to create a more nimble system that will facilitate a more missional appointment process, we recommend modifying the appointment process in the following ways: 1) allow for less than full-time appointment for elders in good standing and 2) allow elders who will not receive appointments to be in the transitional leave status.

Legislative Recommendations: ¶¶321, 334, 337, 338, Study of Ministry Commission

6. Transitional Leave

Principle: The itineracy system serves the mission of the church when it is flexible, nimble, and responsive to changes in context.

Challenge: Elders who are not appointed need to maintain their relationship to the annual conference. Transitional leave provides for that relationship.

Vision: Elders who are not appointed may agree to be placed on transitional leave. It is temporary, mutually planned, requested 90 days prior to the annual conference session, limited to 24 months, and approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry and the Executive Session of the Annual Conference.

Recommendations: In order to create a more nimble system that will facilitate a more missional appointment process, we recommend modifying the appointment process in the following ways: 1) allow for less than full time appointment for elders in good standing and 2) allow elders who will not receive appointments to be in the transitional leave status.

Legislative Recommendations: NEW ¶¶354, ¶355, Study of Ministry Commission

7. Responsibilities of Bishops in the Appointive Processes

Principle: When the appointive process is oriented toward missional objectives, the commission emphasizes that attention must be paid to avoiding sexism, racism, and other injustices as clergy are deployed in the service of the church's mission. As we studied the current disciplinary rubrics we found that those issues are already addressed in ¶430.1:

*Clergy shall be appointed by the bishop, who is empowered to make and fix all appointments in the episcopal area of which the annual conference is a part.
Appointments are to be made with consideration of the gifts and evidence of God's grace*

of those appointed, to the needs, characteristics, and opportunities of congregations and institutions, and with faithfulness to the commitment to an open itineracy. Open itineracy means appointments are made without regard to race, ethnic origin, gender, color, disability, marital status, or age, except for the provisions of mandatory retirement (emphasis ours). Annual conferences shall, in their training of staff-parish relations committees, emphasize the open nature of itineracy and prepare congregations to receive the gifts and graces of appointed clergy without regard to race, ethnic origin, gender, color, disability, marital status, or age. The concept of itineracy is important, and sensitive attention should be given in appointing clergy with physical challenges to responsibilities and duties that meet their gifts and graces. Through appointment-making, the connectional nature of the United Methodist system is made visible.

Thus, the admonition is already in place to make sure that there is not discrimination on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, color, disability, marital status, or age in the appointment process.

Challenge: In spite of a concern for open itineracy, the appointive process is complex and difficult.

Vision: We hope for a more nimble system that responds to missional needs.

Recommendations: In addition to leaving the section on open itineracy in ¶430.1, we recommend the amendment of ¶524 (*Jurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy*) to require an annual meeting, and to include the Episcopal responsibilities listed in ¶416, which includes the bishops' responsibility of making and fixing of appointments. This will facilitate the committee's ability to review and evaluate the commitment of bishops to open itineracy.

Legislative Recommendation: ¶524, *Study of Ministry Commission*

8. Sacramental Authority

Principle: The sacraments are gifts to the church; symbols representing the presence of God in Christ for the transformation of the world through the grace of God. Since the beginning of The United Methodist Church, sacramental authority has been lodged in the order of elders. This is consistent with other denominations and signifies both the presidency of Christ at the sacrament and the connection between the local congregation, the denomination, and the ecumenical community. Sacramental authority is rooted in the whole body of Christ, and in United Methodism is passed on through the episcopal office in ordination.

In the case of extraordinary missional need, and where collaborative ministry among elders, deacons, and local pastors is restricted, the bishop may grant sacramental authority to local pastors and deacons. See ¶316.1 and ¶328 in the 2008 *Book of Discipline* for explanation of "missional need" for local pastors and deacons respectively.

We are seeking to order the sacramental life of the church in ways that are faithful, missional, clear, flexible, and collegial. We should keep before us the need of the world for the presence of God, particularly the new life symbolized by Baptism and the sustaining provision of grace offered in Communion.

Challenge: United Methodism's practical theology has altered the understanding that sacramental presidency resides with the elder for the sake of mission and ministry in some local contexts. As a result the UMC has empowered local pastors and commissioned elders to preside over the Sacraments of Holy Communion and Baptism in the location where they are appointed. This is a break with ecumenical practices that reserve sacramental authority for the ordained.

Recommendation: Eliminating the practice of commissioning will mean that provisional elders will be ordained as they preside over the sacraments. In addition, annual conferences, under the guidance of resident bishops, should be authorized to make allowance for sacramental practices based on needs within their geographic areas. The commission reiterates that local pastors' presidential authorization is derived through the order of elders. Appointment as a local pastor should not automatically include sacramental authority. We expect local pastors to complete the Course of Study and encourage them to continue to move toward satisfying the requirements for ordination as an elder. No disciplinary revisions are recommended.

9. Orders of Ministry

Principle: We affirm the distinctive place of orders of ministry in advancing the mission of the church. Historically the Christian movement has been renewed through the establishment of clergy and lay orders. United Methodism saw such a renewal through the establishment of the Order of Deacons in 1996. Currently, the UMC recognizes two orders:

- Deacons - [The ministry of a deacon] exemplifies and leads the Church in the servanthood every Christian is called to live both in the church and the world. The deacon embodies the interrelationship between worship in the gathered community and service to God in the world. (§305)
- Elders - Persons called to lead through preaching, teaching, administering the sacraments, and ordering the church's life for mission and service following the guidance of the *Discipline* are ordained elders. (§303.2)

God calls persons to set-apart ministry in diverse ways. The Study of Ministry Commission focused on three primary roles for set-apart ministry in The United Methodist Church: elders, deacons and local pastors. Each is called to a common ministry of Word and Service.

- The elder is also called to ministries of Sacrament and Order
- The deacon is also called to ministries of Compassion and Justice
- The local pastor is also called to ministries of Witness and Mission

While persons within these roles may indeed serve in ways that are outside these callings, the primary identity is captured through these designations. In addition, the elder, deacon, and local pastor embody the biblical images of apostle, diakonia, and exhortation.

As persons serve in set-apart ministries, they have specific responsibilities for leading the church to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

- The elder connects the church and the denomination, chiefly through Order.
- The deacon connects the church and the world, chiefly through Service.
- The local pastor connects the church and the individual, chiefly through Proclamation.

Our set-apart leaders enter into a shared ministry. These relationships are more collegial than hierarchical, and must be expressed with flexibility for the sake of the church's mission in the world. The fullness of set-apart ministry in The United Methodist Church includes participation in the Orders of Elders and Deacons and the Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members.

Ministry Roles	Elder	Deacon	Local Pastor
Common Ministry	Word & Service	Word & Service	Word & Service
Distinctive Ministry	Sacrament & Order	Compassion & Justice	Witness & Mission
Biblical Role	Apostolic	Diakonia	Exhortation
Connects Church To	Denomination	World	Individual

Challenge: The commission observes a lack of consistency in how the orders and roles in ministry are understood and supported across the church. Current patterns of recruitment and deployment of deacons and elders may miss the fullness of our mission and opportunities for ministry. For instance, often persons who seek ordination and wish to serve as chaplains (military, hospital, prison, university, etc.), missionaries, theological educators, pastoral counselors, or social justice workers are discouraged from pursuing these callings as members of the Order of Deacons or Order of Elders due to over-reliance on old patterns of ministry.

Vision: Our vision is rooted in Joel 2:28 and the sending of apostles in Luke 10. We pray for an institutional openness to fresh winds of the Spirit that will result in the continued renewal of our existing orders and openness to the fullness of their possibilities.

Recommendation: We urge those who recruit, mentor, assess, and credential candidates for licensed and ordained ministry to be open to the opportunities for ministry offered through our Orders of Deacons and Elders, including ministries beyond local settings. We call the Church to listen for what God is doing among those being called to ministry and to be expectant for what the Spirit may yet do among us.

Legislative Recommendations: ¶¶301, 303, 326, 329, Study of Ministry Commission

Future of the Study of Ministry

The 2009-2012 Study of Ministry Commission recommends that a “Strategic Focus Team on Ministry Issues” be formed for the 2013-2016 quadrennium. We recommend that this team be a small, nimble, and flexible group that will interface with key constituents of the General Church (Council of Bishops, Connectional Table, Boards of Ordained Ministry, Association of United Methodist Theological Schools, The Committee on Faith and Order, etc.) in order to provide a comprehensive and interactive look at ministry issues. The group will be empowered to enlist the church’s theologians, administrators and practitioners to engage in focused research and recommendations on future ministry issues for the UMC. We see the team acting as a catalyst to engage the whole church and provoke deep conversations on the nature and purpose of ministry.

We recommend a Team of 12-15 people with broad representation (ethnicity, age, geographic area, deacons, elders, local pastors, laity, expertise, etc.) and specific skill sets related to ministry (BOM, Cabinet, seminary, agency, and local church). At least one-third (but no more than one-half) of the new team will be members from the 2009-2012 Study of Ministry Commission. We especially advocate the representation and addition of younger clergy as team members.

The scope of the work will be to provide future research and recommendations on any ministry issue lacking clarity from the 2012 General Conference. Secondly, the work of the Focus Team will be constructive and futuristic, examining the following issues that continue to need work:

- The nature and grounding of the elder
- The nature and grounding of the variety of lay ministries
- The Course of Study and education for local pastors
- The status of associate membership
- The education of clergy in terms of seminary reform, relevant curriculum, global theological education, funding, and debt of seminary graduates
- The present accountability structure of United Methodist theological schools including the University Senate and the Commission on Theological Education

The selection of the new Focus Team will reside with the Executive Committee of the Council of Bishops in consultation with the leadership of the past Study of Ministry Commission.

Based on our experience together, the 2009-2012 Study of Ministry Commission would urge that this strategic focus initiative be confessional, relational, and transparent. We would urge that this team be seen as a way to build bridges and linkages among the multiple parties concerned about strengthening leadership resources. We understand that amplified patterns of anxiety are at play in our denominational life. These patterns often result in a failure to sufficiently trust God as the source of our life and work (see Ephesians 2:8-10). The 2009-2012 Commission benefitted greatly from the writing of a covenant prayer that was prayed at each session. It reminded us that this work was not ours alone and that we were bound together in love. The Team would therefore encourage such a covenantal focus for the future.

Proposed Legislation

Amend by Deletion

¶141. Definition of Clergy—Clergy in The United Methodist Church are individuals who serve as ~~commissioned ministers~~, deacons, elders, and local pastors under appointment of a bishop (full- and part-time), who hold membership in an annual conference, and who are ~~commissioned~~, ordained, or licensed.

Amend

¶ 301.2. Within the church community, there are persons whose gifts, evidence of God's grace, and promise of future usefulness are affirmed by the community, and who respond to God's call by offering themselves in leadership as ~~ordained ministers~~ set-apart ministers, ordained and licensed (¶302).

Amend by addition

¶ 303.2. Ordination is fulfilled in leadership of the people of God through ministries of Service, Word, Sacrament, ~~and Order~~, Compassion and Justice. The Church's ministry of service is a primary representation of God's love. Those who respond to God's call to lead in service, word, compassion and justice, and ~~to~~ equip others for this ministry through teaching, proclamation, and worship and who assist elders in the administration of the sacraments are ordained as deacons....

Amend

¶ 306. Order of Deacons and Order of Elders—There shall be in each annual conference an Order of Deacons and an Order of Elders. All persons ordained as clergy in The United Methodist Church upon election to ~~full~~ provisional membership in the annual conference shall be members of and participate in an order appropriate to their election....

Amend

¶ 309. Membership in an Order—1. Persons shall become members of the Order of Deacons or Order of Elders following their election to ~~full~~ provisional membership in the annual conference. Acceptance of the status of ~~full~~ provisional membership will constitute a commitment to regular participation in the life of the order.

Amend by addition

¶ 311.4. A certified candidate must declare to the dCOM in writing his/her intention to pursue ordination at least one year before the expected date of ordination. With a recommendation based on a three-fourths majority vote by the dCOM, the certified candidate will then come under the care of the Board of Ordained Ministry until a final decision is made about ordination and full membership (¶324.10).

Insert new paragraph after the current Par. 311 and renumber subsequent paragraphs

Orientation to Ministry – An orientation to ministry is required for all candidates for licensed and ordained ministry. Attendance at the orientation and becoming a certified candidate may be sequential or concurrent. This common ministry preparation experience is for the purpose of building collegiality and understanding among the varieties of set-apart ministry (deacons, elders, local pastors).

1. The orientation shall be held in each annual conference and is the responsibility of the conference board of ordained ministry.
 2. Collegiality in ministry and commonalities and distinctions among the categories of ministry (deacon, elder, local pastor) will be emphasized to facilitate understanding and appreciation of the gifts contributed through team ministry, and the practice of set-apart ministry within the UM connection will be articulated.
 3. Guidelines will be made available from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Division of Ordained Ministry.
-

Amend

¶ 315. License for Pastoral Ministry—All persons not ordained as elders who are appointed to preach and conduct divine worship and perform the duties of a pastor shall have a license for pastoral ministry. The Board of Ordained Ministry ([¶ 635.2g](#)) may recommend to the executive session of the annual conference the licensing of those persons who are:

~~1. Provisional elders commissioned by the annual conference, or~~

1. Certified candidates who have completed the Orientation to Ministry ([¶XXX](#)) and are serving an appointment.

2. Local pastors who have completed the following:

a) The conditions for candidacy certification in [¶¶ 311.1-2](#) and;

b) The Orientation to Ministry

~~b) c)~~ The studies for the license as a local pastor as prescribed and supervised by the Division of Ordained Ministry or one-third of their work for a Master of Divinity degree at a school of theology listed by the University Senate;

e) ~~d)~~ Been examined and recommended by the district committee on ordained ministry ([¶ 665.8](#));
or....

Amend by deletion

¶ 321. Eligibility and Rights of Associate Members—Associate members of an annual conference are in the itinerant ministry of the Church and are available on a continuing basis for appointment by the bishop. They offer themselves without reserve to be appointed (and to serve as their superiors in office shall direct). They shall be amenable to the annual conference in the performance of their ministry ~~and shall be granted the same security of appointment as provisional members and members in full connection....~~

Amend Section title by addition

Section VI. Ordination and Provisional Membership

Amend

¶ 324. Qualifications for Ordination and Election to Provisional Membership— Provisional membership accompanies the beginning of service as an ordained deacon or elder. A candidate will be ordained when elected to provisional membership. A person shall be eligible for ordination and election to provisional membership in the annual conference by vote of the clergy session on recommendation of its Board of Ordained Ministry after meeting the following qualifications.

1. Candidacy Requirement: Each certified candidate ~~shall have been a certified candidate for ordination and provisional membership shall come under the care of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry for at least one year, and no more than twelve years. During the certification period, the conference Board of Ordained Ministry shall discern fitness for provisional membership and readiness for ordained ministry. Certified candidacy shall last no longer than 12 years.~~

2. Service Requirement: Each candidate shall have demonstrated his or her gifts for ministries of service and leadership to the satisfaction of the ~~district committee on ordained ministry~~ Board of Ordained Ministry as a condition for ordination and provisional membership.

3. Undergraduate Requirement:

c) have graduated with a bachelor's degree or its equivalent from a college not recognized by the University Senate and have completed ~~one-half of~~ the studies of the Master of Divinity or equivalent first professional degree in a school of theology listed by the University Senate.

4. Graduate Requirement:

a) Candidates for deacon or elder shall have completed ~~one-half of~~ the basic graduate theological studies in the Christian faith.

b) a candidate for ordination as an elder shall have completed ~~one-half of~~ the studies toward a Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent, including ~~one-half of~~ the basic graduate theological studies from a seminary listed by the University Senate.

c) a candidate for ordination as a deacon shall have:

(1) completed ~~one-half~~ of the studies of a master's degree

....(3) completed ~~one-half~~ of the basic graduate theological studies,

....5.c) have completed ~~one-half~~ of the minimum of twenty-four semester hours of the basic graduate theological studies

....14. After fulfilling all candidacy requirements and Orientation to Ministry (§XXX) Each candidate shall have been recommended in writing to the clergy session based on at least a two-thirds majority vote of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry. Ordination is approved by two-thirds vote of the clergy session of the annual conference. The bishop and secretary of the conference shall provide credentials as an ordained minister and as a provisional member in the annual conference.

¶ 15. Historic Examination for Admission into Provisional Membership and Ordination—The bishop as chief pastor shall engage those seeking to be admitted in serious self-searching and prayer to prepare them for their examination before the conference. At the time of the examination, the bishop shall also explain to the conference the historic nature of the following questions and seek to interpret their spirit and intent. The questions are these and any others which may be thought necessary:

(1) Have you faith in Christ?

(2) Are you going on to perfection?

(3) Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life?

(4) Are you earnestly striving after perfection in love?

(5) Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and God's work?

(6) Do you know the General Rules of our Church?

(7) Will you keep the General Rules of our Church?

(8) Have you studied the doctrines of The United Methodist Church?

(9) After full examination do you believe that our doctrines are in harmony with the Holy Scriptures?

(10) Have you studied our form of Church discipline and polity?

(11) Do you approve our Church government and polity?

(12) Will you support and maintain them?

(13) Will you exercise the ministry of compassion?

(14) Will you diligently instruct the children in every place?

(15) Will you visit from house to house?

(16) Will you recommend fasting or abstinence, both by precept and example?

(17) Are you determined to employ all your time in the work of God?

(18) Are you in debt so as to embarrass you in your work?

(19) Will you observe the following directions?

(a) Be diligent. Never be unemployed. Never be triflingly employed. Never trifle away time; neither spend any more time at any one place than is strictly necessary.

(b) Be punctual. Do everything exactly at the time. And do not mend our rules, but keep them; not for wrath, but for conscience' sake.

16. The provisional period ends when the provisional member is received as a full member of the annual conference, or a decision is made not to proceed to full connection following the procedures in ¶327.6.

17. A deacon or elder shall be ordained by a bishop by the laying on of hands, employing the Order of Service for the Order to which he or she will be ordained (see ¶ 415.6). The bishops shall be assisted by other deacons and elders and may include laity designated by the bishop representing the Church community. Bishops in other communions may join the ordaining bishop in laying hands on the head of the candidate, while participating deacons, elders and laity may lay hands on the back or shoulders of the candidate.

¶325 Delete and renumber subsequent paragraphs

~~¶ 325. Commissioning—Commissioning is the act of the church that publicly acknowledges God's call and the response, talents, gifts and training of the candidate. The church invokes the Holy Spirit as the candidate is commissioned to be a faithful servant leader among the people, to lead the church in service, to proclaim the Word of God and to equip others for ministry. Through commissioning, the church sends persons in leadership and service in the name of Jesus Christ and marks their entrance into a time of provisional membership as they prepare for ordination. Commissioned ministers are provisional clergy members of the annual conference and are accountable to the bishop and the clergy session for the conduct of their ministry. During the residency program the clergy session discerns their fitness for ordination and their effectiveness in ministry. After fulfilling all candidacy requirements and upon recommendation of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry, the clergy session shall vote on the provisional membership and commissioning of the candidates. The bishop and secretary of the conference shall provide credentials as a provisional member and a commissioned minister in the annual conference. The period of commissioned ministry is concluded when the provisional members are received as full members of the annual conference and ordained as either deacon or elder, or a decision is made not to proceed toward ordination and provisional membership is ended.~~

Amend

¶ 326.1. Provisional members planning to give their lives as deacons in full connection shall be in ministries of Word, and Service, Compassion and Justice in the local church or in an approved appointment beyond the local church.

A provisional member preparing for ordination as a deacon shall be licensed for the practice of ministry during provisional membership to perform the duties of the ministry of the deacon as stated in ¶ 328 and be granted support as stated in ¶ 331.14.

2. Provisional members ~~planning to give their lives as elders in full connection~~ shall be in ministries of Word, Sacrament, Order, and Service in the local church or in an approved extension ministry.

~~A provisional member preparing for ordination as an elder shall be licensed for pastoral ministry (§ 315).~~

3. Provisional members who are serving in extension ministries, enrolled in graduate degree programs, or appointments beyond the local church shall be accountable to the district superintendent and the Board of Ordained Ministry for the conduct of ministry, and for demonstrating their effectiveness in the ministry ~~of the order to which they seek to be ordained~~. In all cases, they will also demonstrate their effectiveness in servant leadership in the local church to the satisfaction of the Board of Ordained Ministry.

4. Provisional members seeking to change their ~~ordination track~~ ordained order shall:....

Amend

¶ 327. Eligibility and Rights of Provisional Membership—

...Annually, the Board of Ordained Ministry shall review and evaluate their relationship and make recommendation to the clergy members in full connection regarding their continuance. ~~No member shall be continued on probation beyond the eighth regular session following their admission to provisional membership.~~

~~1. Provisional members who are preparing for deacon's or elder's orders may be ordained deacons or elders when they qualify for membership in full connection in the annual conference.~~

2. 1. Provisional members shall have the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except the following:

a) constitutional amendments;

b) election of delegates to the general and jurisdictional or central conferences

c) b) all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.....

~~4. 3. Provisional members preparing to become elders shall be eligible for appointment by meeting disciplinary provisions (§ 315).~~....

~~6. 5.a)~~ When ordained provisional members in good standing withdraw to unite with another denomination or to terminate their membership in The United Methodist Church, their action shall be considered a request for discontinuance of their relationship and their ordination and membership credentials shall be surrendered to a district superintendent.

b) Prior to any final recommendation of discontinuance without consent, an ordained provisional member will be advised of the right to a hearing before the executive committee of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry. A report of the action will be made to the full board. The provisions of fair process (§ 362.2) shall be observed and there shall be a review by the administrative review committee under § 636 prior to hearing by the annual conference. When this relationship is discontinued, they shall no longer be permitted to exercise ministerial functions and shall return their ordination and membership credentials to the district

superintendent for deposit with the secretary of the conference, and their membership shall be transferred by the district superintendent to the local church they designate after consultation with the pastor. The Board of Ordained Ministry shall file with the resident bishop and the secretary of the conference a permanent record of the circumstances relating to discontinuance as a provisional member as required in ¶ 635.3d. After discontinuance, provisional members may be classified and approved as local pastors in accordance with the provision of ¶ 316.

c) No member shall be continued on provisional membership beyond the eighth regular session following their admission to provisional membership.

Amend title by deletion

Section VII. The Ordained Deacon ~~in Full Connection~~

Amend

¶ 329. Ministry, Authority, and Responsibilities of Deacons ~~in Full Connection~~—

1. Deacons are persons called by God, authorized by the Church, and ordained by a bishop to a lifetime ministry of Word, ~~and Service, Compassion and Justice~~, to both the community and the congregation in a ministry that connects the two. Deacons exemplify Christian discipleship and create opportunities for others to enter into discipleship. ~~In the world, the deacon seeks to express a ministry of compassion and justice, assisting laypersons as they claim their own ministry.~~ The work of deacons is a work of justice, serving with compassion as they seek to serve those on the margins of society. In the congregation, the ministry of the deacon is to teach and to form disciples, and to lead worship together with other ordained and laypersons.

2. ~~The deacon in full connection shall have the rights of voice and vote in the annual conference where membership is held; shall be eligible to serve as clergy on boards, commissions, or committees of the annual conference and hold office on the same; and shall be eligible for election as a clergy delegate to the General, central, or jurisdictional conference. The deacon in full connection shall attend all the sessions of the annual conference and share with elders in full connection responsibility for all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy (¶ 334.1).~~

3. As members of the Order of Deacons, all deacons in full connection are in covenant with all other such deacons in the annual conference and shall participate in the life of their Order.

Add: to all paragraphs referring to deacons where the words “Word and Service” appear the following words, “Compassion and Justice.”

Amend

¶ 330. Requirements for ~~Ordination as Deacon and Admission of Ordained Deacon~~ to Full Connection—Provisional members who are applying for admission into full connection and who have been provisional members for at least two years ~~following the completion of the educational requirements for ordination as a deacon specified in .3 below~~ may be admitted into membership in full connection in an annual conference by two-thirds vote of the clergy members in full connection of the annual conference, upon recommendation by two-thirds vote of the Board of Ordained Ministry, after they have qualified as follows:

~~....2. They shall have been previously elected as a provisional member.~~

~~....d) Historic Examination for Admission into Full Connection and Ordination as Deacon—The bishop as chief pastor shall engage those seeking to be admitted in serious self-searching and prayer to prepare them for their examination before the conference. At the time of the examination, the bishop shall also explain to the conference the historic nature of the following questions and seek to interpret their spirit and intent. The questions are these and any others which may be thought necessary:~~

~~(1) Have you faith in Christ?~~

~~(2) Are you going on to perfection?~~

~~(3) Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life?~~

~~(4) Are you earnestly striving after perfection in love?~~

~~(5) Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and God's work?~~

~~(6) Do you know the General Rules of our Church?~~

~~(7) Will you keep the General Rules of our Church?~~

~~(8) Have you studied the doctrines of The United Methodist Church?~~

~~(9) After full examination do you believe that our doctrines are in harmony with the Holy Scriptures?~~

~~(10) Have you studied our form of Church discipline and polity?~~

~~(11) Do you approve our Church government and polity?~~

~~(12) Will you support and maintain them?~~

~~(13) Will you exercise the ministry of compassion?~~

~~(14) Will you diligently instruct the children in every place?~~

~~(15) Will you visit from house to house?~~

~~(16) Will you recommend fasting or abstinence, both by precept and example?~~

~~(17) Are you determined to employ all your time in the work of God?~~

~~(18) Are you in debt so as to embarrass you in your work?~~

~~(19) Will you observe the following directions?~~

~~(a) Be diligent. Never be unemployed. Never be triflingly employed. Never trifle away time; neither spend any more time at any one place than is strictly necessary.~~

~~(b) Be punctual. Do everything exactly at the time. And do not mend our rules, but keep them; not for wrath, but for conscience' sake.~~

~~6.5. A provisional member of the annual conference who has completed the requirements for deacon's orders and admission into full membership shall be eligible for election to full membership and ordination as deacon by a bishop. Following election, the bishop and secretary of the conference shall provide a certificate of full membership in the annual conference, and following ordination, a certificate of ordination.~~

~~7. A deacon shall be ordained by a bishop by the laying on of hands, employing the Order of Service for the Ordination of Deacons (see ¶ 415.6). The bishops shall be assisted by other deacons and may include laity designated by the bishop representing the Church community. Bishops in other communions may join the ordaining bishop in laying hands on the head of the candidate, while participating deacons and laity may lay hands on the back or shoulders of the candidate.~~

Amend by deletion

¶ 331. Appointment of Deacons in Full Connection to Various Ministries—

1. Deacons in full connection may be appointed to serve as their primary field of service:....
2. Deacons in full connection may be appointed to attend school as part of their renewal and personal growth.....
- ...4. When deacons in full connection serve in an agency or setting beyond the local church....
- ...6. The appointment of deacons in full connection shall be made by the bishop.
 - a) It may be initiated by the bishop or the district superintendent, individual deacon in full connection, or the agency seeking their service.
 - b) It shall be clarified by a written statement of intentionality of servant leadership in order to establish a clear distinction between the work to which all Christians are called and the work for which deacons in full connection are appropriately prepared and authorized.
 - c) The deacon in full connection shall then seek another appointment,
 - d) Deacons in full connection at their request
7. At the request of the deacon in full connection
 - a) The deacon in full connection shall
 - b) Reappointment to less than full-time service shall be requested annually of the bishop by the deacon in full connection.
 - c) The bishop may make an interim appointment of less than full-time service upon request of a deacon in full connection,
8. With approval and consent of the bishops or other judicatory authorities involved, deacons in full connection from other annual conferences, other Methodist churches, or other denominations may receive appointments in the annual conference while retaining their home conference membership or denominational affiliation. Appointments are to be made by the bishop of the conference in which the deacon in full connection is to serve.
9. Deacons in full connection with the approval
10. Deacons in full connection who are serving

Insert New Paragraph after current ¶331. Renumber subsequent paragraphs.

Voting Rights for Deacons in Full Connection - The deacon in full connection shall have the rights of voice and vote in the annual conference where membership is held; shall be eligible to serve as clergy on boards, commissions, or committees of the annual conference and hold office on the same; and shall be eligible for election as a clergy delegate to the General, central, or jurisdictional conference. The deacon in full connection shall attend all the sessions of the annual conference and share with elders in full connection responsibility for all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy (¶ 334.1).

Amend title by deletion

Section VIII. The Ordained Elder ~~in Full Connection~~

Amend

¶ 332. Ministry of an Elder—Elders are ordained ministers who, by God’s grace, have completed their formal preparation and ~~have been commissioned and served as a provisional member,~~ have been found by the Church to be of sound learning,...

1. Elders by virtue of their ordination are bound in special covenant with all the ordained elders of the annual conference. In the keeping of this covenant they perform the ministerial duties and maintain the ministerial standards established by those in the covenant. They offer themselves without reserve to be appointed and to serve, after consultation, as the appointive authority may determine. They live with all other ordained ministers in mutual trust and concern and seek with them the sanctification of the fellowship. By entering into the covenant, they accept and subject themselves to the process of clergy discipline, including serving on committees on investigation, trial courts, or appellate committees. Only those shall be elected to full membership who are of unquestionable moral character and genuine piety, sound in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and faithful in the discharge of their duties.¹²

2. A provisional member of the annual conference who has completed the requirements for admission into full membership shall be eligible for election to full membership. Following election, the bishop and secretary of the conference shall provide a certificate of full membership in the annual conference.

¶333. Delete and renumber subsequent paragraphs

~~¶ 333. Elders in Full Connection—1. Elders in full connection with an annual conference by virtue of their election and ordination are bound in special covenant with all the ordained elders of the annual conference. In the keeping of this covenant they perform the ministerial duties and~~

maintain the ministerial standards established by those in the covenant. They offer themselves without reserve to be appointed and to serve, after consultation, as the appointive authority may determine. They live with all other ordained ministers in mutual trust and concern and seek with them the sanctification of the fellowship. By entering into the covenant, they accept and subject themselves to the process of clergy discipline, including serving on committees on investigation, trial courts, or appellate committees. Only those shall be elected to full membership who are of unquestionable moral character and genuine piety, sound in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and faithful in the discharge of their duties.¹²

2. A provisional member of the annual conference who has completed the requirements for Elder's Orders and admission into full membership shall be eligible for election to full membership and ordination as elder by a bishop. Following election, the bishop and secretary of the conference shall provide a certificate of full membership in the annual conference, and following ordination, a certificate of ordination.

3. An elder shall be ordained by a bishop by the laying on of hands, employing the Order of Service for the Ordination of Elders (see ¶ 415.6). The bishop shall be assisted by other elders and may include laity designated by the bishop representing the Church community. Bishops in other communions may join the ordaining bishop in laying hands on the head of the candidate, while participating elders and laity may lay hands on the back or shoulders of the candidate.

Amend by deletion

¶ 334. ~~Ministry, Authority, and Responsibilities of an Elders in Full Connection~~—An elder in full connection is authorized to give spiritual and temporal servant leadership in the Church in the following manner:

1. Elders in full connection shall have the right to vote on all matters in the annual conference except in the election of lay delegates to the general and jurisdictional or central conferences (¶ 602.1a) and shall share with deacons in full connection responsibility for all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy. This responsibility shall not be limited by the recommendation or lack of recommendation by the Board of Ordained Ministry, notwithstanding provisions which grant to the Board of Ordained Ministry the right of recommendation.¹³ They shall be eligible to hold office in the annual conference and to be elected delegates to the general and jurisdictional or central conferences under the provision of the Constitution (¶ 35, Article IV). Every effective elder in full connection who is in good standing shall be continued under appointment by the bishop provided that if the elder is appointed to serve in an affiliated relationship in a missionary conference (¶ 586) and that appointment is terminated by the bishop who presides in the missionary conference, then the responsibility for meeting this obligation rests with the bishop of the conference of which the elder is a member.¹⁴....

Amend

¶ 335. Requirements for Admission to Full Connection and Ordination as an Elder—Provisional members who are candidates for full connection and ordination as elders and have been provisional members for at least two years may be admitted into membership in full connection in an annual conference and approved for elder's ordination by two-thirds vote of the clergy members in full connection

Insert New ¶ after current ¶335. Renumber subsequent paragraphs.

Voting Rights of Elders in Full Connection - 1. Elders in full connection shall have the right to vote on all matters in the annual conference except in the election of lay delegates to the general and jurisdictional or central conferences (¶ 602.1a) and shall share with deacons in full connection responsibility for all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy. This responsibility shall not be limited by the recommendation or lack of recommendation by the Board of Ordained Ministry, notwithstanding provisions which grant to the Board of Ordained Ministry the right of recommendation.¹³ They shall be eligible to hold office in the annual conference and to be elected delegates to the general and jurisdictional or central conferences under the provision of the Constitution (¶ 35, Article IV).

¶336. Delete and renumber subsequent paragraphs

~~Admission and Continuance of Full Membership in the Annual Conference~~

~~¶ 336. Historic Examination for Admission into Full Connection—The bishop as chief pastor shall engage those seeking to be admitted in serious self-searching and prayer to prepare them for their examination before the conference. At the time of the examination the bishop shall also explain to the conference the historic nature of the following questions and seek to interpret their spirit and intent. The questions are these and any others that may be thought necessary:~~

- ~~1. Have you faith in Christ?~~
- ~~2. Are you going on to perfection?~~
- ~~3. Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life?~~
- ~~4. Are you earnestly striving after it?~~
- ~~5. Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and his work?~~
- ~~6. Do you know the General Rules of our Church?~~
- ~~7. Will you keep them?~~
- ~~8. Have you studied the doctrines of The United Methodist Church?~~
- ~~9. After full examination, do you believe that our doctrines are in harmony with the Holy Scriptures?~~
- ~~10. Will you preach and maintain them?~~
- ~~11. Have you studied our form of Church discipline and polity?~~
- ~~12. Do you approve our Church government and polity?~~

13. Will you support and maintain them?
 14. Will you diligently instruct the children in every place?
 15. Will you visit from house to house?
 16. Will you recommend fasting or abstinence, both by precept and example?
 17. Are you determined to employ all your time in the work of God?
 18. Are you in debt so as to embarrass you in your work?
 19. Will you observe the following directions?
 - a) Be diligent. Never be unemployed. Never be triflingly employed. Never trifle away time; neither spend any more time at any one place than is strictly necessary.
 - b) Be punctual. Do everything exactly at the time. And do not mend our rules, but keep them; not for wrath, but for conscience' sake.¹⁸
-

Amend

¶ 337. General Provisions—

1. All elders in full connection who are in good standing in an annual conference shall be continued under appointment by the bishop unless they are granted a sabbatical leave, an incapacity leave (¶ 357), family leave, a leave of absence, retirement, or have failed to meet the requirements for continued eligibility (¶ 334.2, .3), provided that if the elder is appointed to serve in an affiliated relationship in a missionary conference (¶ 586.4.b) and that appointment is terminated by the bishop who presides in the missionary conference, then the responsibility for meeting this obligation rests with the bishop of the conference of which the elder is a member.¹⁹
 2. ~~1. In addition to~~ Ordained elders; and persons who have been granted a license for pastoral ministry and who have been approved by vote of the clergy members in full connection may be appointed to local churches as ~~pastors in charge under certain conditions, which are specified in~~ ¶¶ 315–318. All clergy members and licensed local pastors to be appointed shall assume a lifestyle consistent with Christian teaching as set forth in the Social Principles.
 - ~~3. 2. Elders and deacons in full connection,~~
 - ...c) All persons in such appointments ~~should~~shall:
 - ...3. In the case that an elder or associate member in good standing is not continued under appointment one of the following steps shall be taken:
 - a) If the elder is not continued because a missional appointment is not available, then the bishop shall recommend the elder to the Board of Ordained Ministry for transitional leave (¶XXX).
 - b) If the elder is not continued because of ineffectiveness then the bishop shall initiate a complaint according to the processes in ¶361 at least 90 days prior to the annual conference.
-

Amend

¶ 338. The Itinerant System—The itinerant system is the accepted method of The United Methodist Church by which ordained elders are appointed by the bishop to fields of labor.²⁰ All

ordained elders shall accept and abide by these appointments. Bishops and cabinets shall commit to and support open itineracy and the protection of the prophetic pulpit and diversity. Persons appointed to multiple-staff ministries,

...2. At the initiative of the bishop and cabinet or at his or her request, an elder may receive a less than full-time appointment ~~Less than full-time service may be rendered by a clergy member~~ under the conditions stipulated in this paragraph.²¹ Less than full-time service shall mean that a specified amount of time less than full-time agreed upon by the bishop and the cabinet, the clergy member, and the annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry is devoted to the work of ministry in the field of labor to which the person is appointed by the bishop. At the initiative of the bishop and cabinet or at ~~At~~ his or her own initiative, a clergy member ~~may request and~~ may be appointed in one-quarter, one-half, or three-quarter time increments by the bishop to less than full-time service without loss of essential rights or membership in the annual conference.

Division Ordained Ministry-endorsed appointments beyond the local church may be for less than full-time service. Appointment to less than full-time service is not a guarantee, but may be made by the bishop, provided that the following conditions are met:

a) The ordained elder seeking less than full-time service should present a written request to the bishop and the chairperson of the Board of Ordained Ministry at least ~~three months~~ 90 days prior to the annual conference session at which the appointment is made. Exceptions to the ~~three-month~~ 90 day deadline shall be approved by the cabinet and the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry.

b) The bishop may appoint an ordained elder, provisional member elder, or an associate member to less than full-time service. The clergyperson shall be notified at least 90 days prior to the annual conference at which the appointment shall be made. Special attention shall be given to ensure that the values of open itineracy are preserved.....

Amend

¶ ~~342.~~ Support for Elders ~~in Full Connection~~ Appointed to Pastoral Charges—

....1. Support for Elders ~~in Full Connection~~ Appointed to Pastoral Charges Who Render Full-Time Service—Each elder ~~in full connection~~ of an annual conference

...2. Support for Ordained Elders Appointed to Pastoral Charges Who Render Less than Full-Time Service—Each elder ~~in full connection~~ who is in good standing

Amend

¶ ~~344.~~ Provisions for Appointment to Extension Ministries—

....1. b) Appointments to extension ministries of elders ~~in full connection~~,

...3. Relation to the Local Church—

.... All conference members who are elders ~~in full connection~~,

Amend

¶ 349. Mentors—....

- 1.a) Candidates will be assigned to a candidacy mentoring group wherever possible or to a candidacy mentor by the district committee on ordained ministry in consultation with the vocational discernment coordinator (wherever named) and the district superintendent (¶ 311).
4. Clergy mentoring begins when a person receives an appointment as a local pastor or as a ~~commissioned minister entering provisional service~~ provisional member deacon or elder.

Insert New Par. After current 353 – Transitional Leave

{This legislation is still being finalized and edited}

Renumber subsequent paragraphs.

Amend by deletion

¶ 354. Voluntary Leave of Absence—

2. A voluntary leave of absence may be taken for a variety of reasons:...

~~e) Transitional Leave—A leave granted for up to twelve months with approval of the bishop and the Board of Ordained Ministry Executive Committee to provisional and associate members and full clergy members in good standing who are temporarily between appointments.~~

~~A transitional leave of absence may be granted for the following reasons:~~

~~(1) A provisional or full member deacon needs to seek and secure an appointable primary position—compensated or nonsalaried.~~

~~(2) A provisional member, associate member, or full member elder needs to transition from an extension ministry to another appointment.~~

~~During transitional leave, the clergyperson shall provide quarterly substantiation of his or her effort to obtain such an appointable position to the bishop and to the Board of Ordained Ministry Executive Committee.....~~

Amend

¶ 524. Jurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy—1. It shall meet at least ~~biennially~~ annually....

3. The jurisdictional committee on episcopacy shall:

- a) Review and evaluate annually the work of the bishops, pass on their character and official administration, and report such evaluations and other findings to the jurisdictional conference for such action as the conference may deem appropriate within its constitutional warrant of power. The evaluation shall include those areas of responsibility outlined in ¶ 414, ~~and~~ ¶ 415, and ¶416 as well as the bishop's leadership in the promotion and support of the full payment of apportionments.
-

Amend by addition

¶ 635. Conference Board of Ordained Ministry—

....1. c) The board shall organize by electing from its membership a chairperson, registrars, and such other officers as it may deem necessary. A vocational discernment coordinator may be named to coordinate the candidacy mentoring process.

2. b) To renew a culture of call in the church by giving strategic leadership to annual conferences, districts, congregations, campus ministries, camps, and other appropriate ministries, especially among youth and young adults.

Renumber subsequent points

2009-2012
Study of Ministry Commission

Episcopal Leadership

Bishop Al Gwinn
Bishop Grant Hagiya
Bishop Eben Nhiwatiwa

Members

Philip Amerson
Aslam Barkatt
Jennifer Burns
Ken Carter
Tom Choi
Margaret Ann Crain
Allison Carr Dickerson
David Dodge
Holger Eschmann
Reece Fauscett
Thelma Florez
Taylor Fuerst
Amy Gearhart
J.F. Lacaria
Pat Luna
Rose McLean

Sean McRoberts
Ianther Mills
Luis Eduardo Ramirez
Jasmine Smothers
Clare Sullivan
Faaagi Taufete'e
Donna Trinko
Jay Williams

Staff

Kim Cape, GBHEM
Randy Cross, GBHEM
Donna Gaither, GBOD
Meg Lassiat, GBHEM
Sharon Rubey, GBHEM
Anita Wood, GBHEM